Florida Local Mitigation Strategies

After Action Review

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INTRODUCTION

The *Florida Local Mitigation Strategies After Action Review* synthesizes the perspectives of Counties in Florida on their Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) planning experience into ways that the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) can improve service to the counties. The report is intended to serve as a tool for FDEM to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as provide better support to the counties in future endeavors.

The LMS is a plan developed by the county to reduce or eliminate the risks associated with natural hazards. These plans provide a framework for risk-based decision making to reduce damages to lives, property and the economy from future disasters. The plans must comply with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and be updated every 5 years to receive federal mitigation grant money. Mitigation planning aims to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. FDEM Mitigation Planning Unit assists counties in the update and review process of the LMS. The LMS liaisons provide technical support, knowledge of funding sources, and general information about hazard mitigation to the counties.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section describes the methodology followed to gather information and solicit opinions from the counties through a survey sent out to each county's LMS Chair. The second section includes the results from the survey which was to provide their opinion on the planning process, the relationship with FDEM, plan implementation, and moving forward. The third section involves recommendations and ways that FDEM can respond to the feedback in order to improve the LMS update cycle. The information offered in this report is intended to improve the services provided by FDEM to the counties and to ensure effective mitigation planning. The names or designations of specific respondents have been excluded from the report in order to preserve the integrity of the responses through anonymity. This exact information is maintained at FDEM so that any county specific issues that were mentioned could be addressed directly, if possible.

This after action review was conducted and authored by interns from the Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning. As interns, they were able to gather and synthesize the data and information candidly from the respondents. The document was written for FDEM to use and distribution to any parties who might benefit from learning about the local mitigation strategy update process.

LMS UPDATE AND REVIEW PROCESS OVERVIEW

The LMS update, submittal, and review process consists of several steps between the county governments, FDEM, and FEMA. LMS planners recommended counties started on the update of the plan 18 months prior to their current plan's expiration date. FDEM sends out reminder letters 1 year, 6 months, and 3 months prior to the expiration date of a plan. Six months prior to their expiration date, plans were to be submitted to FDEM for review. It was FDEM's intention to complete its initial review in 30 days. If the state reviewer determined that the plan required revisions, then it was returned to the county who would then make the necessary changes and resubmit the plan to be reviewed once more. This cycle continues until FDEM determines that the plan meets all of FEMA's requirements adequately and at that point, FDEM formally submits the plan to FEMA for review. FEMA's review procedure estimates for a review time of 45 days per plan. If FEMA determines that changes are still necessary, the plan is returned to FDEM, who returns it to the county and assists them in making necessary changes. This process continues until the plan receives formal approval from FEMA.

This estimated timeline is a guideline for the review process. The actual length of time needed from the first submittal to the formal approval will vary based on a number of different factors. Each situation is unique so it is impossible for FDEM to say exactly how long the review process will take. Some factors that contribute to a lengthening of the process may include:

- Backlog of plans – If multiple counties have submitted their plans simultaneously, then this will increase the amount of time needed to review the plans.
- Length – Longer plans take longer to review because there is more material that must be read comprehensively.
- Number of revisions – If an updated plan requires major revisions then the review will take longer complete. This also has an effect on the second review.
- Availability of second reviewers – Every first submittal of a plan will be reviewed by two reviewers (the LMS liaison and a second reviewer). In some cases the second reviewer may be busy or backlogged which has the potential to lengthen the review process.

It is FDEM's intention to involve the county governments throughout the review process. In some instances where counties relied heavily on the use of consultants to write their plans, they may have also been involved in the process.

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CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many conclusions and recommendations that can be drawn from the data that was gathered through the survey as they pertain to FDEM and the LMS update process. The recommendations are generalized items that were either mentioned or inferred that FDEM can use to adjust or improve its own effectiveness in the process rather than specific action items. The included quotations exemplify some of the conclusions and recommendations that were specifically stated by respondents and echoed by others. These conclusions reflect the perceptions of the respondents but are not intended to indicate that FDEM is not performing these tasks. At the time of this writing, there are steps being taken to address some of the items mentioned in this section. Where this is applicable it will be stated.

The majority of respondents noted that they needed additional guidance/clarification with the crosswalk, particularly with Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan (Element 18), Assessing Vulnerability (Element 7), and Profiling Hazards (Element 6). Many counties felt that the crosswalk does not explicitly state what FEMA is looking for and how to accomplish various elements of the crosswalk. Clarification of FEMA's requirements and examples of best practices should be provided. Overall, the LMS review process needs to be consistent, simplified, and more efficient. The creation of a new review tool is underway which intends to address some of these elements.

> "Although there is guidance, courses and subject matter experts, it seems as though there is still controversy on what is needed and what is not. It is very confusing and hard to understand. The crosswalk at times is redundant and not clear."

> "Coordinate more closely with FEMA and move ahead in streamlining the process by removing some of the confusion in getting the document accepted through review."

If one assessment tool (HAZUS, MEMPHIS, etc.) is more effective than another or more useful in specific applications, this should be noted. Training in HAZUS and MEMPHIS prior to updating the plan would be valuable. Various counties also felt that obtaining additional training prior to the LMS update would be beneficial. While the G-318 course was described as being somewhat helpful to planners updating their LMS plan, additional more extensive courses discussing the components of the LMS, the process, the implementation phases of the LMS, what is required, and how to get the updated LMS plan approved were suggested.

> "The G-318 course was more for beginners involved with the LMS. It could be more helpful if it went into more detail on what was truly expected to be submitted."

> "Provide state training earlier and throughout the LMS cycle (not just on update years). Offer this training (G-318) in several locations around the state."

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Examples of a FEMA-approved LMS plan available as a reference during the update process were suggested. Templates, best practices, or guides should be provided to each county to further demonstrate what is expected. This coincides with a desire for more and consistent guidance, but includes elements of formatting, content, and expectations for the document itself. A document that contains examples from recently approved plans is currently being created.

> "Provide examples of best practices on various elements of the LMS Plan. Provide template for mitigation strategies by hazard."

> "Develop a model document that meets all criteria. It is understood that all communities are unique, however it would be helpful to have a standard to work from."

The LMS liaison should maintain regular contact with each county. Questions should be answered in a timely fashion along with requests for assistance and any required revisions. The LMS liaison should facilitate communication between FEMA and State and Local Governments. As such they would also serve as a liaison with FEMA for the counties. Furthermore, there were a couple of counties that were unaware of the role of the LMS liaison. A description of their role in the LMS process accompanied by an explanation of how they can best serve the county in this process might be beneficial. Things counties felt they should do in the future to facilitate the LMS process were to start earlier and to involve other LMS Working Group members more in the process. The LMS liaison can play a role in encouraging counties to implement these concepts in the next update process.

> "Keeping the lines of communication open would be a big help, especially for rural counties. Having a contact person (liaison) stay in touch occasionally with the LMS Chair to make sure everything is running smoothly during the update process would help."

> "Encourage jurisdictions to start earlier, possibly by giving a realistic time line of how long it takes to get through the approval path."

Counties felt it would be helpful for FDEM to provide assistance with grants and funding as well as improved technical and staffing assistance. In particular, Mitigation should provide expertise and technical assistance and aid in identifying qualified staff to work on the LMS. It was recommended that they foster insight regarding FEMA's requirements and expectations of the LMS plan. Finally, Mitigation should focus their efforts in this process on assisting counties in implementing their mitigation plans.

> "The LMS requirement is time consuming. Many counties, including mine, do not have the finances to hire someone whose main purpose is LMS. The State could look at possible funding for LMS positions within the counties."

"Need a class that goes beyond the update process and focuses on applying for and managing mitigation grants."

"Downsizing has caused gaps in staff expertise, particularly GIS. The GIS function is still available, but not in our section and there is more competition for the remaining resources."

As far as specific recommendations, there are some major points that should be taken into consideration based on the data and the comments provided through the survey.

- Many counties praised the internship program that DEM provided, in collaboration with Florida State University. These interns provided willing and capable employees who exclusively focused on updating the majority of, if not all of, a county's LMS plan. This program should be continued for the next cycle of LMS updates.

- Many counties did not realize or underestimated the amount of time it would take to update their plans and some plans took longer to get through the update process than was anticipated. Despite the recommended timeline for submittal, some plans did not, or could not, be completed in time. Continuing to strongly encourage counties to begin their process with ample time for updating the plan and the review process itself is highly important, though FDEM is limited in its capability to enforce any deadlines. The earlier a plan is turned in prior to its expiration date, the sooner it will get reviewed, and there will be more time to make revisions to the plan as necessary. It is also important for FDEM to continue recognize that some local governments have less or limited resources to devote to the LMS plan, and this should remain as an important consideration when discussing a submittal timeline.

- Many counties want more specific training and examples of successful LMS plans. A best practices guide or model for LMS plans should also be created as a guideline and example for counties. FDEM should do what it can to provide additional trainings to augment and supplement the G-318 training so that it is more applicable to specific counties or regions and provide the training more frequently and locally.

- Staff turnover at the local level and the state level can make communication and consistency difficult. FDEM should do what it can to keep the acting LMS liaison consistent throughout the review process. This ensures that a relationship is formed between the state and the county and the guidance remains consistent. An additional element to this is for FDEM to have interns who can assist the LMS liaison with the review process. This would decrease the turnaround time and increase efficiency.

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METHODOLOGY

Survey Creation

The questions for the survey were created through a collaborative process. Several brainstorming sessions and meetings were held between the three interns responsible for conducting the After Action Review and other mitigation planning staff to determine the scope and the individual questions that would be placed on the survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather information in order to improve the service of FDEM to the counties and their LMS Working Groups. The survey was tested on a number of individuals to ensure that the questions were clearly communicated and understood. The surveys were first distributed at the end of February 2011 and responses were accepted through the end of April 2011.

Population Selection

DEM was most interested in the perspective of the county employees as this is the majority of whom FDEM serves. The individuals selected to receive the survey were chosen by DEM LMS liaisons who worked with each county. The criteria used by the liaisons to select potential respondents included:

- Must be a county employee
- Had the most communication with the LMS liaison during the update process

Selected recipients were typically LMS coordinators, LMS Working Group chairpersons, or county planners. Four counties were not surveyed because their LMS plans were just beginning the review process or were not yet due for state review. These four counties are: Gadsden, Flagler, Glades, and Lee.

Distribution of Surveys

Approximately one week prior to survey distribution, an email was sent to each selected respondent informing the recipient that the survey was being conducted and the purpose of the survey. The second email sent enclosed the actual survey. The recipients were given several options by which to complete the survey. These options included:

- Fill out a PDF survey electronically and send it back as an attachment
- Print out the PDF, fill out the survey, scan it and send it back as an attachment
- Print out the PDF, fill out the survey and then fax it
- Fill out the survey online using www.esurveyspro.com
- Answer the survey questions over the phone by speaking with an intern

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If the recipients did not fill out the survey, reminders were sent via email, usually one week from the date of the original survey email and then on a regular basis moving forward. If the reminder emails were unsuccessful, then a phone call was made to encourage the recipient to fill out the survey. Of the 63 counties for which surveys were distributed, DEM successfully obtained survey responses from 57 counties (90%). When including partial or incomplete survey responses, the total number of responses increases to 59 counties (94%). Follow up emails were sent for clarification or more information. All the data gathered and analyzed was done so by the interns assigned to the project. The survey in its entirety can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis of the Survey Questions

An analysis was conducted for each individual question. The methodologies for analyzing the questions were chosen by the interns who performed them. Two sets of methodology were used depending on if the responses provided were quantitative or qualitative. Microsoft Excel was used in all of the analyses.

Before any analysis, some of the responses were coded to prepare it for quantitative analysis. For example, in Question 4 "yes" was coded as 1, "somewhat" as 2, "no" as 3, and "I don't know" as 0. This coding makes it easier for Excel to produce useful and understandable outputs like graphs. The counts of the responses and the percentages were compared to see if there was an answer choice(s) that were especially noteworthy. If an answer choice had a response of 40% or higher, it was considered to be significant. In some instances a standard deviation was found to examine the variation among the responses. The standard deviation for the responses showed how much each response varied from the average response. This showed if certain data points were clustered or if the data was spread out over a wide range.

Qualitative data came in the form of short answer responses in questions 11, 12, 14, & 15. The free responses were reviewed and grouped into common themes. The themes were coded by responses that fit that category for statistical analysis. In some cases, some responses addressed multiple categories. These responses were counted twice, often resulting in a total count greater than the total number of respondents.

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ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

This section of the report will discuss the analysis and general findings of each question from the survey. It will provide general summaries of the data with brief mention of what might be inferred from the data when applicable. The analysis will identify trends in the data and possible explanations as needed. Recommendations based on the analysis and findings will be done in the next section.

Respondent Involvement

Q1. How were you involved with the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS)? Please check all that apply.
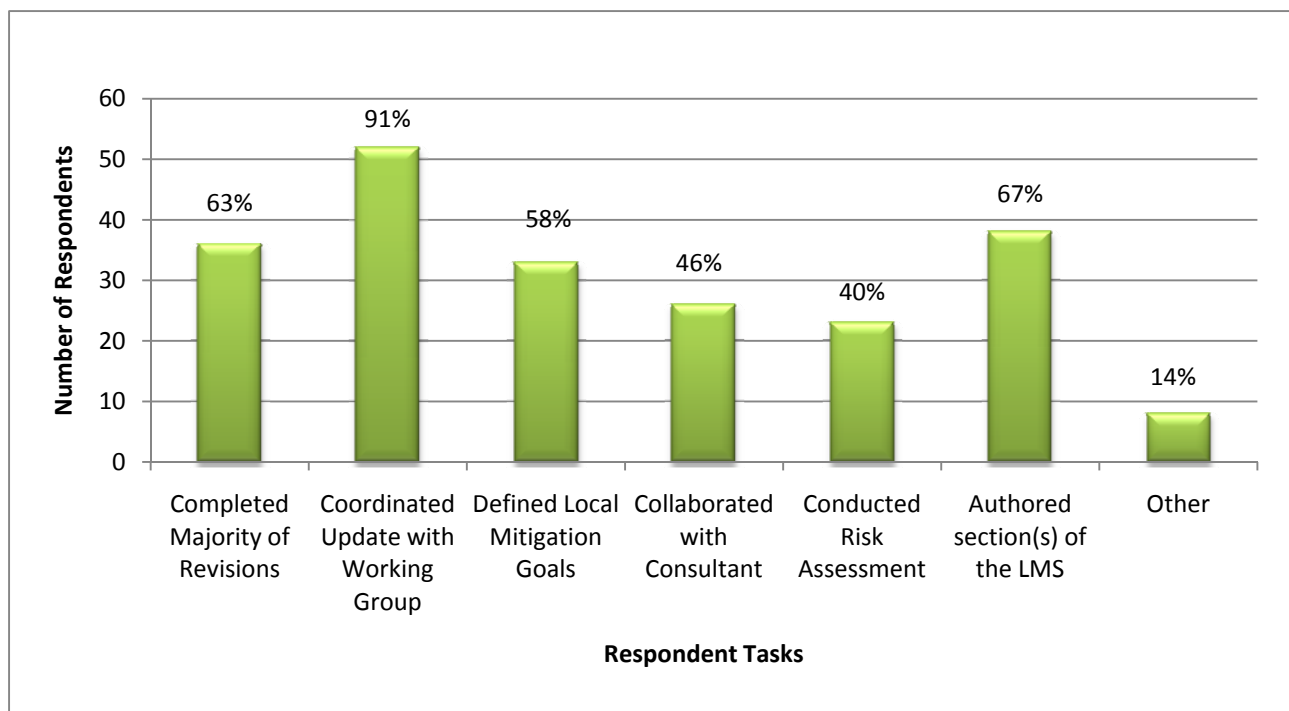
Figure 1: Question 1 Results: Respondents Involvement in the LMS.

Question 1 was intended to gather information about the respondents and to what extent they were involved in the LMS. Because the surveys were sent to the person with whom FDEM had the most communication during the LMS approval and review process, it was necessary to find out what level of involvement the respondent had in order to contextualize the rest of the survey.

According to the data, 91% of respondents coordinated with the working group during the LMS process. This was the most significant role that the respondents played. The other roles were conducted by at least 40% of the respondents, with some reaching up to 67%. Over half (53%) of the respondents both completed revisions and also authored sections of the LMS. These

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responses indicate that the respondents were involved significantly enough that their further responses can be considered applicable.

LMS Process

Q2. Which sections of the LMS did your county need more guidance on during the update process as they relate to the crosswalk? Please check all that apply. (Element number refers to FEMA's Crosswalk)
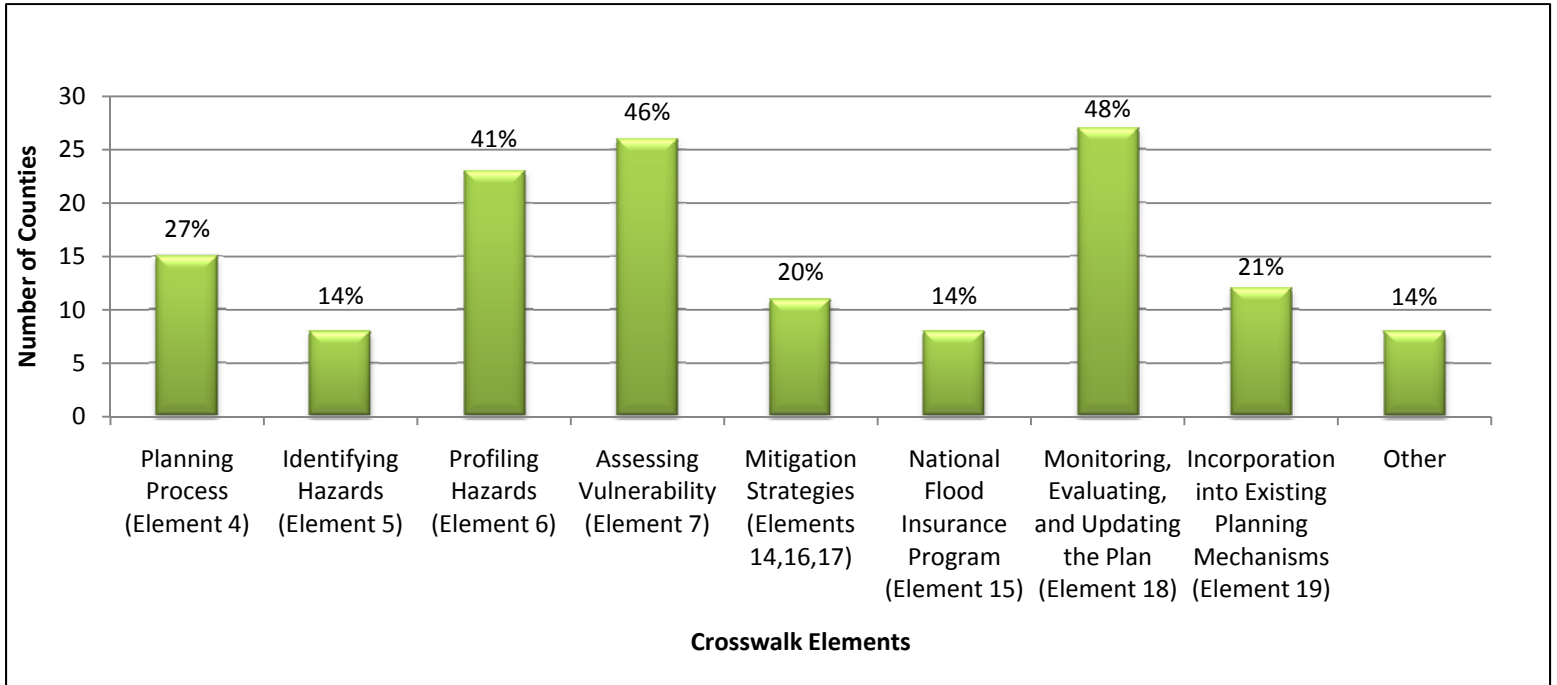
Figure 2: Question 2 Results: Sections of the Crosswalk for which Counties Needed More Guidance

The purpose of question 2 was to see which elements in the FEMA crosswalk caused the most issues for counties in updating their LMS and getting it approved. The options provided were specific sections from the FEMA crosswalk, and the respondents had the option of selecting "other" and clarifying what other elements presented them trouble. Respondents also had the option of writing in an explanation to why and what kind of guidance was needed.

The sections of the crosswalk for which the most number of counties needed additional guidance were Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan (Element 18), Assessing Vulnerability (Element 7), and Profiling Hazards (Element 6). These sections were identified by 48%, 46%, and 41% of counties, respectively. It was expected from experience in reviewing plans that Profiling Hazards (Element 6) would be identified as a problematic element.

Three counties stated that they did not need more guidance. The other comments made under the "Other" category were: "magnitude and impacts criteria", "establishing a prioritization

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process (mitigation strategies)", and "methodologies were hard to describe." Two other comments were discounted because the responses were not relevant to the question asked.

Why you needed more guidance and what kind of guidance would have been helpful:

The following are direct quotations provided to this optional portion of question 2:

- Project List
- One of our municipalities was not included in the modeling
- To understand what FEMA was really looking for and what was acceptable…
- The magnitude request (optional for the 2010 update) was vague. The City of Jacksonville/Duval County used a zip code analysis to address this issue.
- Under mitigation strategies, specifically establishing a prioritization process. The guidance I need was more clarification of what FEMA was specifically looking for regarding specific language.
- The NFIP Element was new for this update, so getting all of the information to meet that requirement was a little difficult. DEM provided me with some examples of how other jurisdictions met that requirement, which was a big help.
- Felt that the guidance in most areas was lacking and made it more difficult to complete
- Need further clarification as to which assessment tool is the preferred and appropriate/accurate one, e.g. HAZUS, Taos, MEMPHIS…
- Would like to see examples of best practices. Provide boiler plate descriptions for non-location specific aspects of hazards.
- Just understanding what the State wanted in terms of profiling the hazard. All the required information wasn't really understood.
- Some of the guidance and criteria were very confusing as to what was expected by FEMA. Our FDEM Mitigation Bureau representative, [*personal information removed*] had great expertise and was extremely helpful throughout the update working well with the county and consultants hired to assist the update. Best practices on involving the public would have been helpful.

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Q3. After completing the LMS, would you change anything about how your county updated the plan? Please check all that apply.
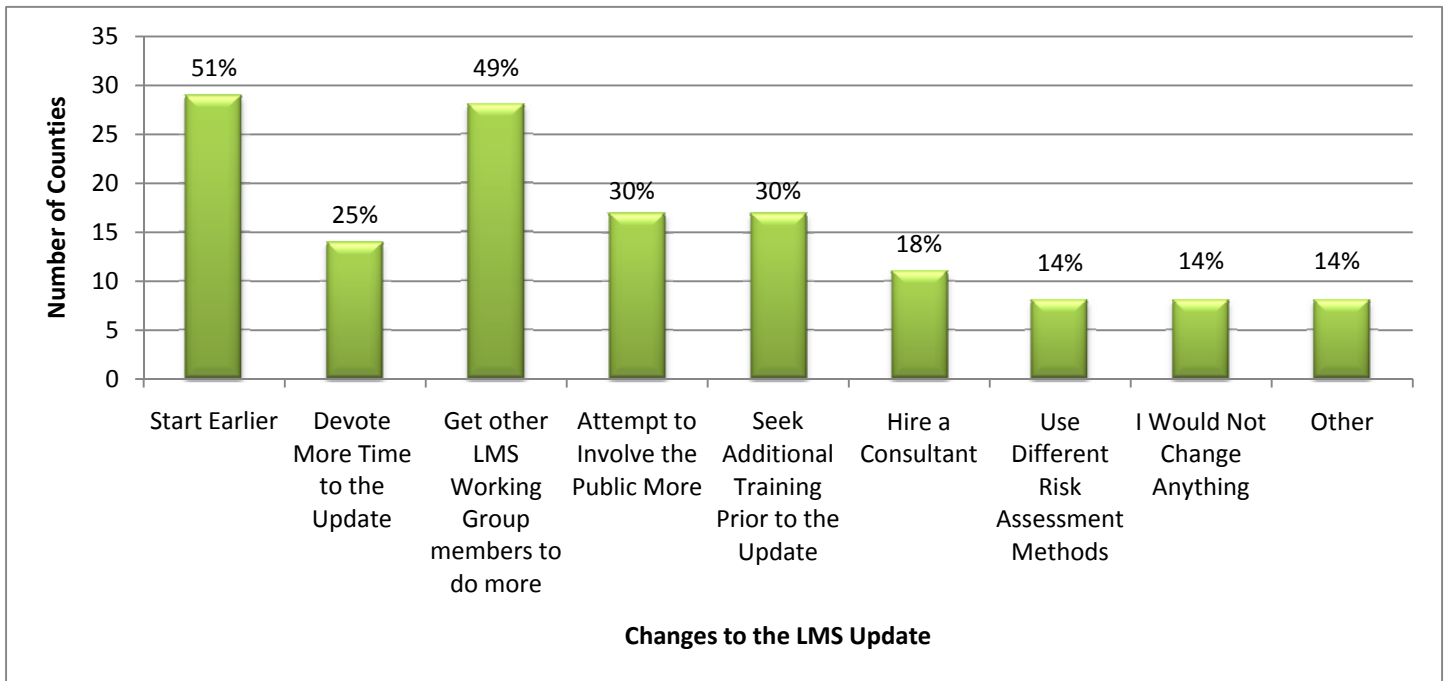
Figure 3: Question 3 Results: What Counties Would Have Changed about the LMS Update Process

The purpose of question 3 was to gather information about what the counties might have done differently regarding the LMS Update process given their individual experiences. The respondents were given a list of common options, including the ability to write in something that was not included.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they would have started working on the LMS earlier or would have gotten more participation from their respective LMS working groups. These were the two most indicated options. Nearly 1/3 of the respondents also indicated that they would seek additional training before the update began, as well as try to include the public more.

Some of the responses in the "other" category were that some counties would highly recommend the consultants they had hired, including more municipalities in the process, and allocating more staff to the update.

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Questions 4 through 6 asked the respondents to rate their experiences using HAZUS and MEMPHIS. HAZUS and MEMPHIS are risk assessment tools that the counties have at their disposal that can be utilized to assist in updating portions of their LMS.

Q4. Did your county use the following tools (HAZUS or MEMPHIS) to develop the LMS Plan? Please check your response.

County HAZUS Use

Don't know 17%
Yes 25%
No 32%
Somewhat 26%

County MEMPHIS Use

Don't know 20%
Yes 36%
No 27%
Somewhat 18%
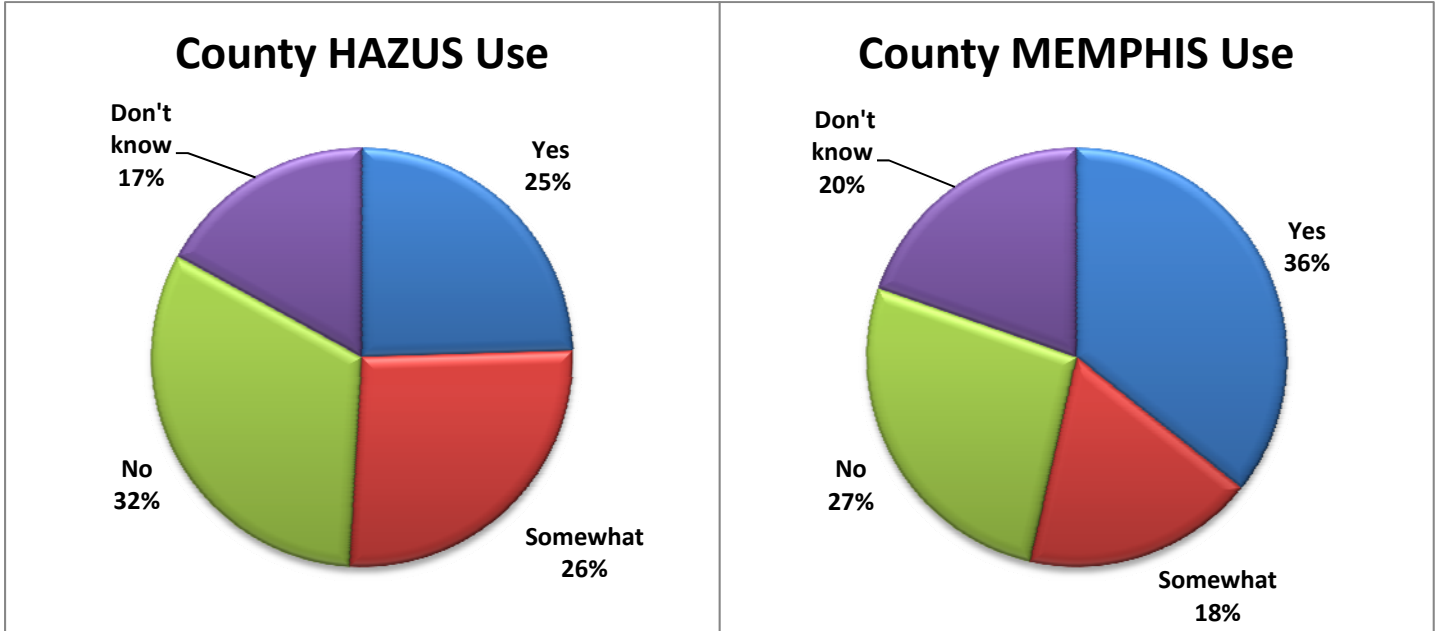
Figure 4: Question 4 Results: County Usage of HAZUS and MEMPHIS

Question 4 gathered information about the use of HAZUS and MEMPHIS during the LMS update process. HAZUS and MEMPHIS were the two most common tools used for conducting risk and vulnerability assessments.

Based on the responses, a majority of counties used, or somewhat used, HAZUS or MEMPHIS. About one third of counties did not use HAZUS or did not use MEMPHIS. More counties used MEMPHIS than HAZUS. 50% of the counties used both HAZUS and MEMPHIS.

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Q5. If your county used HAZUS or MEMPHIS, how user friendly were the programs? Please check your response.

HAZUS User Friendliness

- Easy to use 2%
- Somewhat easy to use 23%
- Hard to use 15%
- Don't know 60%

MEMPHIS User Friendliness

- Easy to use 18%
- Somewhat easy to use 27%
- Hard to use 6%
- Don't know 49%
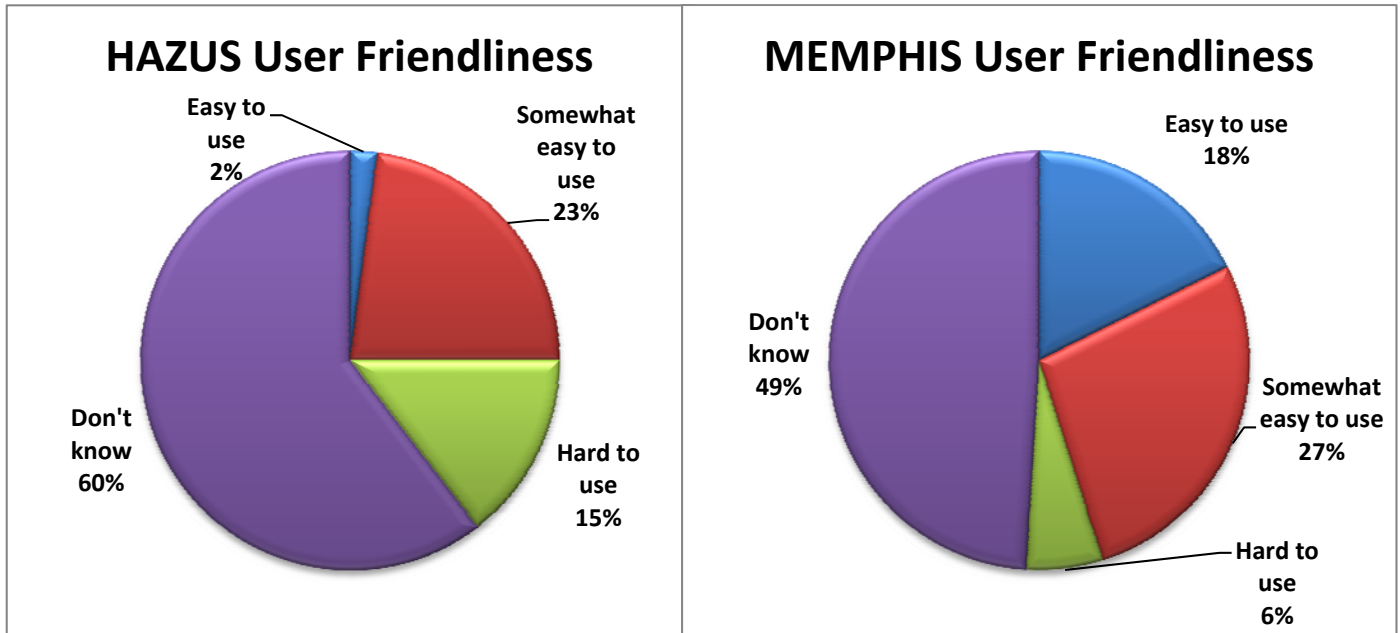
Figure 5: Question 5 Results: User Friendliness of HAZUS and MEMPHIS

Question 5 gathered information about the perceived user friendliness of HAZUS and MEMPHIS from those counties that used them. These responses reflect those respondents who answered "Yes" to question 4. Neither system had a majority indicating that they were easy to use. Only 2% of HAZUS users felt HAZUS was easy to use and 15% felt it was hard to use. 18% of MEMPHIS users felt it was easy to use, compared to 6% thinking it was hard to use. Some respondents were aware of the use of either system in their plan, but may not have had direct experience using it and therefore could not provide an adequate assessment. This accounts for the large percentage of "Don't know" in for both tools.

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Q6. If your county used HAZUS or MEMPHIS, how helpful were the programs? Please check your response.
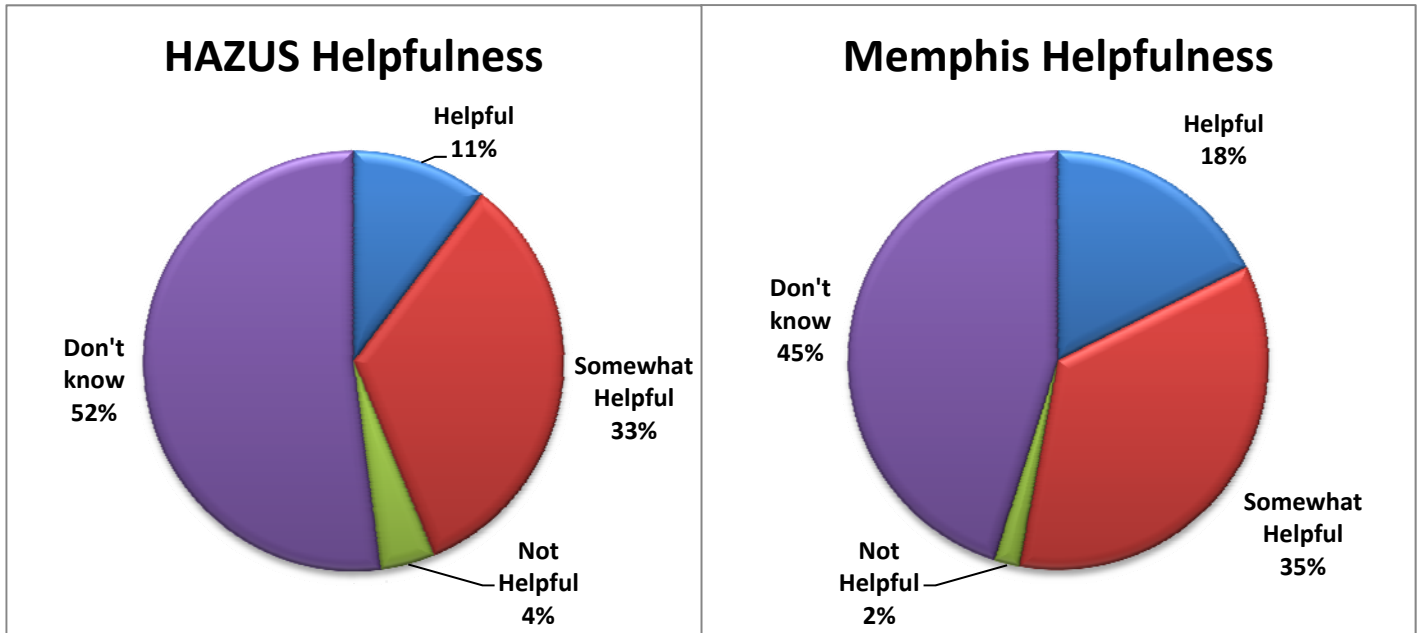
Figure 6: Question 6 Results: Helpfulness of HAZUS and MEMPHIS

Question 6 gathered information about the perceived helpfulness of HAZUS and MEMPHIS from those counties that used them. These responses reflect those respondents who answered "Yes" to question 4. Two-thirds of respondents for each system found them to be "somewhat helpful." 11% and 18% of respondents categorized HAZUS and MEMPHIS, respectively, as "helpful" compared to 4% and 2% categorizing them respectively as "not helpful." Some respondents were aware of the use of either system in their plan, but may not have had direct experience using it and therefore could not provide an adequate assessment. This accounts for the large percentage of "Don't know" in for both tools.

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Q7. Have you attended a FEMA G-318 course? If Yes, was the G-318 training helpful during the LMS update process?

G-318 Training Attendance

No
26%

Yes
74%

G-318 Helpfulness

No
14%

Yes
33%

Somewhat
53%
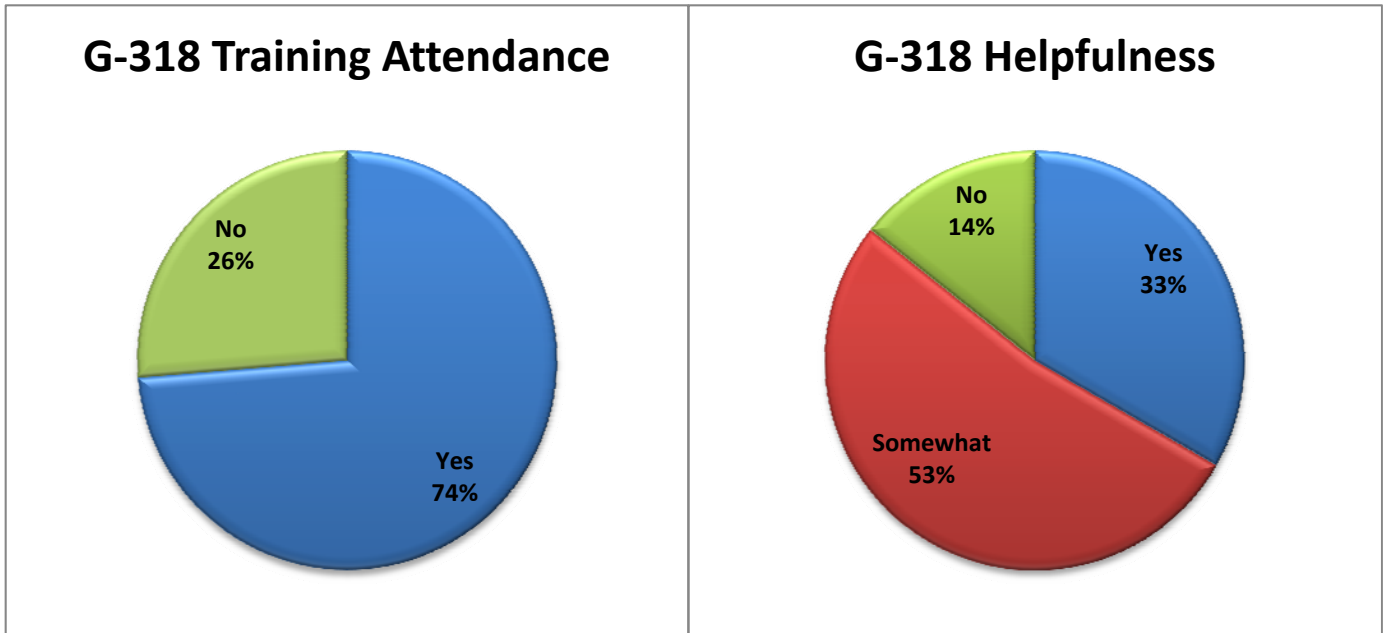
Figure 7: Question 7 Results: G-318 Training Attendance and Helpfulness

Question 7 contained two parts. The first part gathered information to see how many of the respondents had attended a FEMA G-318 "Mitigation Planning Workshop for Preparing and Reviewing Local Plans" course. The second part asked if those respondents who had attended a G-318 training found it helpful or not. The majority of respondents who took a G-318 course found it somewhat helpful, while a third found it entirely helpful. An interesting perspective about the helpfulness of G-318 can be taken from the comments of one respondent: "The G-318 course was more for beginners involved with the LMS. It could be more helpful if it went into more detail on what was truly expected to be submitted."

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Q8. Were there any other tools, methods or handouts that were helpful in the LMS update process? Please check all that apply
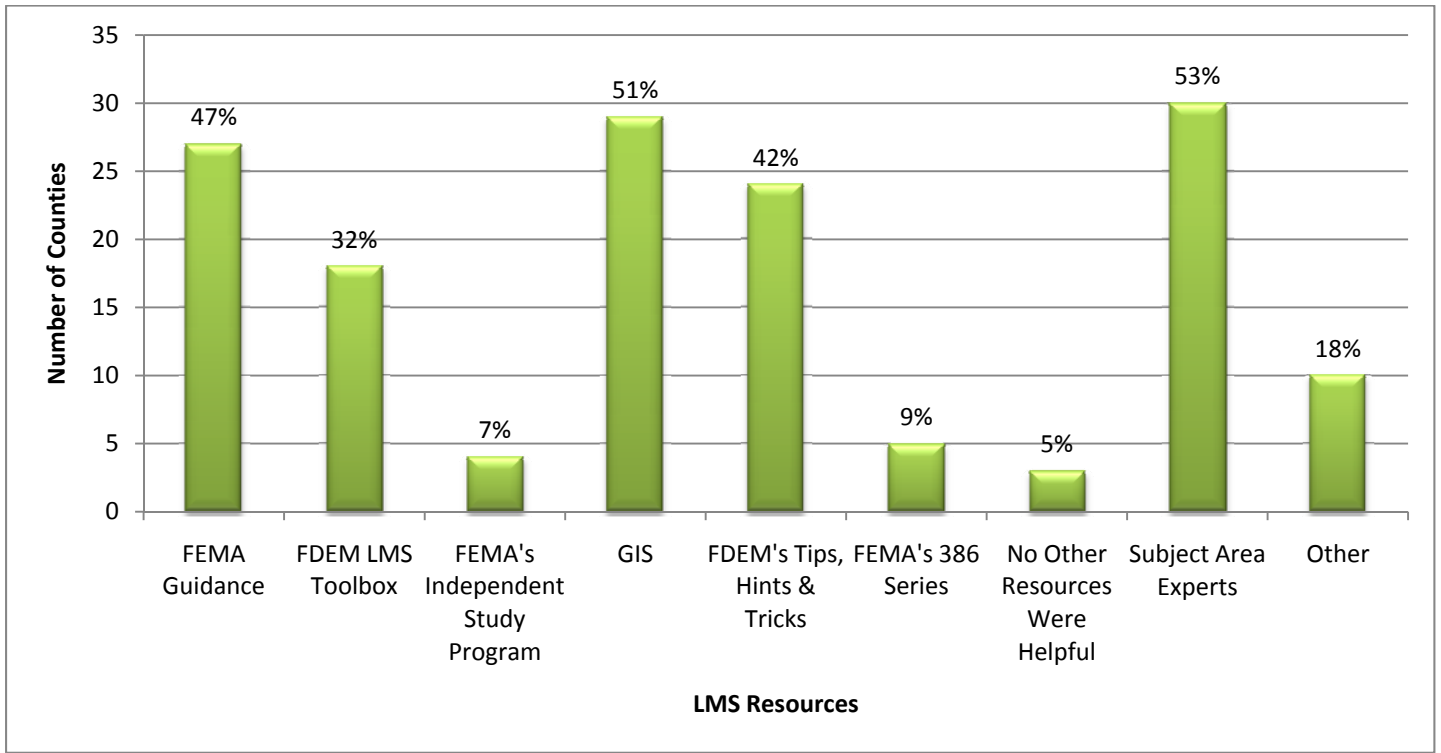
Figure 8: Question 8 Results: Helpful Tools, Methods, and Handouts for the LMS Update Process

Question 8 was intended to gather information about what were the most common tools used in updating the LMS. This information will allow FDEM to gauge how helpful certain tools were and how others might be improved. Subject area experts, GIS, and FEMA guidance were the most commonly used tools. FDEM's Tips, Hints & Tricks (a document that provided some specific guidance about portions of the LMS) and the FDEM LMS Toolbox (a resource on ways/places to gather information relevant to the LMS) were also cited as being used by a significant proportion of counties.

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Q9. If a consultant was used, how did your county go about selecting the consultant? Please check your response.
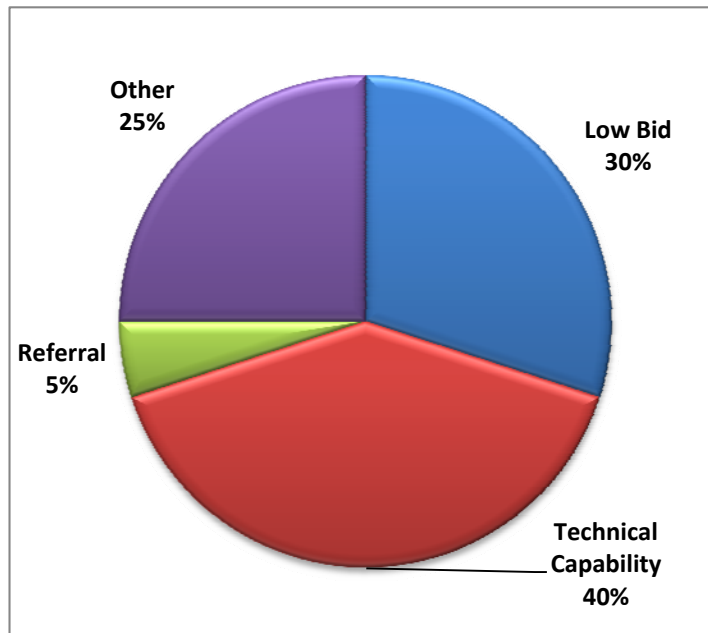
Figure 9: Question 9 Results: Consultant Selection Criteria

Question 9 gathered information from the counties who hired a consultant to update their LMS and asked what the criterion was for their selections. This information will allow FDEM to potentially identify further collaboration and training opportunities with consultants. The majority of counties who chose consultants chose them because of their technical capabilities (40%), while some counties used a low bid selection (30%). Interns provided to the counties as part of the FDEM-FSU internship program were not considered consultants.

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Relationship with FDEM

In order to provide a context for the readers of this report, the current FDEM LMS liaisons gave written responses to a set of questions. The purpose of these questions was to help those who view the survey results to better understand the challenges and duties of the LMS liaisons. The answers to the questions from both liaisons can be found in Appendix B.

Q10. Please describe the relationship with your state LMS liaison. Was your state LMS liaison:

Table 1: Question 10 Results: Ranking the Relationship with the State LMS Liaison

	Helpful	Informative/ Knowledgeable	Provided Timely Feedback	Difficult to work with	Easy to Reach	Personable	Professional
Yes	79%	77%	77%	9%	60%	81%	81%
Somewhat	7%	9%	7%	7%	26%	5%	5%
No	4%	2%	5%	72%	4%	4%	4%
I don't know	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%	9%	9%

Question 10 of the survey was intended to allow respondents to rate their interactions with their FDEM state liaisons. It was subdivided into seven characteristics, which were meant to further describe the LMS liaison-respondent interaction: Helpful, Informative/Knowledgeable, Provided Feedback in a Timely Manner, Difficult to Work With, Easy to Reach, Personable, and Professional. Respondents rated their LMS liaison in each characteristic by marking "Yes," "Somewhat," "No," or "I don't know." The respondents were also given the choice to submit feedback in the form of freehand text.

Of the surveyed counties fifty-seven respondents (90%) answered Question 10. One of the fifty-three respondents answered with freehand text, and did not check any boxes for any individual LMS liaison characteristic.

The categories of Helpful, Informative/Knowledgeable, Provided Feedback in a Timely Manner, Personable, and Professional were given "Yes" ratings by 79%, 77%, 77%, 81%, and 81% of counties, respectively. Including the "Somewhat" responses, these percentages increase to 88%, 86%, 84%, 86%, and 86% respectively. The percentage of "No" responses to the category of Difficult to Work With oppositely mirror the "Yes" responses from the previously mentioned categories. 72% of respondents indicated "No" for the Difficult to Work With category.

The Easy to Reach category only received a "Yes" indicator from 60% of respondents, with 26% indicating "Somewhat". This may indicate that availability and communication appeared as more of an issue to some respondents than the other categories because there were less definitive "Yes" responses. Overall, the combined "Yes" and "Somewhat" responses are still high, combining for 86% of responses, which is at the same level as the other categories.

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In all categories, the respondents describe the LMS liaisons in a positive manner (greater than 84% positive response: "Yes" and "Somewhat" responses combined for all categories, except "Difficult to work with" where the "No" and "Somewhat" responses were used). 28 respondents (49%) gave the LMS all "Yes" except, in "Difficult to work with", where a "No" response was appropriate.

Written Responses to Question 10

Table 2: Question 10 Supplemental Response Categories

Response Category	Count	Percentage
Positive reference to staff	10	45%
Negative reference to staff	2	9%
Inconsistency of Staff	5	23%
Other	6	27%
Total	22	100%

The survey respondents were given the opportunity to respond to question 10 with freehand text. Twenty-two of respondents (39%) supplemented their answers to Question 10 using written responses. These responses were categorized by common theme. These categories included:

- Positive Reference to Staff
- Negative Reference to Staff
- Inconsistency of Staff
- Other

None of the free hand answers to question 10 are double counted in the categories.

Positive Reference to Staff – The "Positive Reference to Staff" category describes a response that specifically indicated staff was good to work with, performed their duties well, or described that an individual staff member did their job well. Of the twenty two respondents who provided a written response 10 respondents (45%) fell into the "Positive Reference to Staff" category.

Negative Reference to Staff – The "Negative Reference to Staff" category specifically describes a response that indicated that staff did not perform their duties well. Two responses (9%) fell into the "Negative Reference to Staff" category.

Inconsistency of Staff – The "Inconsistency of Staff" category describes responses related to the lack of consist staff members during the LMS update process. Of the twenty-two responses, five responses (23%) dealt with the inconsistency of staff. All of these

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responses were negative in nature. Frustration was expressed due to the lack of consistency of staff reviewing LMS plans due to the reviewer changing or staff turnover.

Other – The "Other" category described a response if it was essentially a comment that did not match up with the other three categories and could not be grouped together thematically with other responses. These six responses described issues with the following topics:

- Consistency of revisions to LMS's by reviewers
- MEMPHIS as a questionable risk analysis tool
- Mentioning that the LMS liaison worked with a contractor
- CEMP crosswalk connections to the LMS
- How unclear the LMS Crosswalk is
- Need of financial assistance to implement projects

Q11. What were your expectations of FDEM regarding the LMS update process?

Table 3: Question 11 Results: Categories of FDEM Expectations and Meeting Those Expectations

Category	Count	% of Questions	Expectations Met	% Met	Expectations Not Met	% Not Met	Do Not Know	% Not Known
Provide technical assistance in editing and revising LMS/ Ensure Compliance	24	47%	22	92%	2	8%	0	0%
Keep Staff Consistent/Praised Current Staff	8	16%	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Maintain a Consistent Review Process	5	10%	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%
Timeliness of Assistance	10	20%	6	60%	3	30%	1	10%
Act as the FEMA Liaison	4	8%	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%
Too General to Categorize	5	10%	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Did Not Know	5	10%	2	40%	0	0%	3	60%

Question 11 was designed to give respondents an opportunity to define what they felt the role of FDEM was during the update process. The respondents answered this question using a free response format. Fifty-one (81%) of the surveyed counties answered the question. The responses from each answer were categorized by common theme. Some of the answers to question 11 responses are double counted in the categories. The reason for doing so is that some responses reflected multiple expectations from the survey respondents.

The categories and descriptions are as follows:

Provide Technical Assistance in Editing and Revising LMS/ Ensure Compliance – This category comes from any response that refers to technical assistance, guidance, providing insight, meeting requirements, or providing information. More responses fell into this category

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than any other. Of the 51 responses, 24 (47%) of the responses fell into this category. Of those 24 responses, 22 of them (92%) indicated that their expectations were met and two of them (8%) indicated that their expectations were not met.

Keep Staff Consistent/Praised Current Staff – This category comes from any response that refers to the importance of keeping current staff or current staff members were praised in the responses. Of the 51 responses, eight (16%) fell into this category. 100% of the respondents whose responses fell into this category indicated that their expectations were met.

Maintain a Consistent Review Process – This category comes from any response that refers to maintaining consistency in the review process and other issues related to the process itself. Of the 51 responses, five (10%) responses fell into this category. 100% of the respondents whose responses fell into this category indicated that their expectations were not met. This was the only category where 100% of the responses were stated that their expectations were not met. This indicates that FDEM may want to investigate whether a more systematic review process can be produced or to better communicate early on what is needed during the review process.

Timeliness of Assistance – This category comes from any response that refers to the timeliness of any aspect of assistance provided by FDEM. Of the 51 responses, ten (20%) responses fell into this category. Six of the ten respondents (60%) whose responses fell into this category indicated that their expectations were met and three of the ten respondents (30%) indicated that they were not met. One response indicated "I don't know."

Act as the FEMA Liaison – This category comes from any response that indicated that FDEM would act as a liaison to FEMA, a representative to FEMA, an advocate to FEMA, or some kind of intermediary relationship with FEMA. Of the 51 responses, four (8%) responses fell into this category. Two of the respondents (50%) indicated that their expectations were met and two respondents (50%) indicated that their expectations were not met.

Too General to Categorize – This category comes from any response that did not refer to a category that could be easily categorized because the responses were not specific enough to do so. Of the 51 responses, five responses (10%) fell into this category. 100% of the responses indicated that their expectations were met.

Did Not Know – This category comes from any response that indicated that they did not know what the expectations were from FDEM. Of the 51 responses, five responses (10%) fell

into this category. Two of the respondents (40%) indicated that their expectations were met and three (60%) indicated that they did not know.

Q12. Were your expectations met? Please check your response. If No, please explain.

Table 4: Question 12a Results: Meeting Expectations

"Were your expectations met?"		% of Responses
Yes	39	71%
No	11	20%
I Don't Know	5	9%
Total	55	100%

Table 5: Question 12b Results: Explanation of Unmet Expectations

If No, Please Explain.	Count	% of Responses
Lack of consistency	6	55%
Overly Complex Process	3	27%
Slow process	5	45%

Question 12 was designed to allow respondents to indicate whether they felt the roles and standards they defined in question 11 were in fact met during the LMS update process. Fifty-five (87%) of respondents answered question 12. Four of these respondents (7%) did not define what their expectations were in question 11.

The respondents were able to answer by checking boxes marked "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." Thirty-nine respondents (71%) answered "Yes" and eleven respondents (20%) answered "No." Five respondents (9%) answered "I don't Know."

The extension of question 12 for respondents answering "No" was intended to allow respondents the ability to express how FDEM failed to meet their expectations. Of the 11 respondents that indicated that their expectations were not met, all of them provided written explanations. One respondent who indicated that his expectations were met also responded to the "If No, please explain" statement. This response has been excluded from the analysis. One of the respondents who answered the Statement "If No, please explain." did not answer Question 11. This response is included in the analysis. The eleven responses were categorized by the following common themes:

- Lack of consistency
- Overly complex process
- Slow process

Some of the answers are double counted in the categories. The reason for doing so is that some responses reflected multiple concerns. The responses are summarized below.

Lack of Consistency – This category comes from any response that indicated there was a lack of consistency from FDEM during the update process. This is in regards to both staff turnover and inconsistency in the actual review process. This category describes most

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of the responses. Of the 11 responses, six responses (55%) were described as relating to a lack of consistency.

Overly Complex Process – This category comes from any response that indicated that the update process was overly complex or described a number of obstacles in the way of the approval process. Of the 11 responses, three responses (27%) were described as indicating the LMS update process was overly complex.

Slow Process - This category comes from any response that indicated that the LMS update process took too long to complete. Of the eleven respondents, five respondents (45%) indicated that the process was too slow.

Implementation

Q13. What types of obstacles stand in the way of implementing mitigation projects in your county? Please check all that apply.
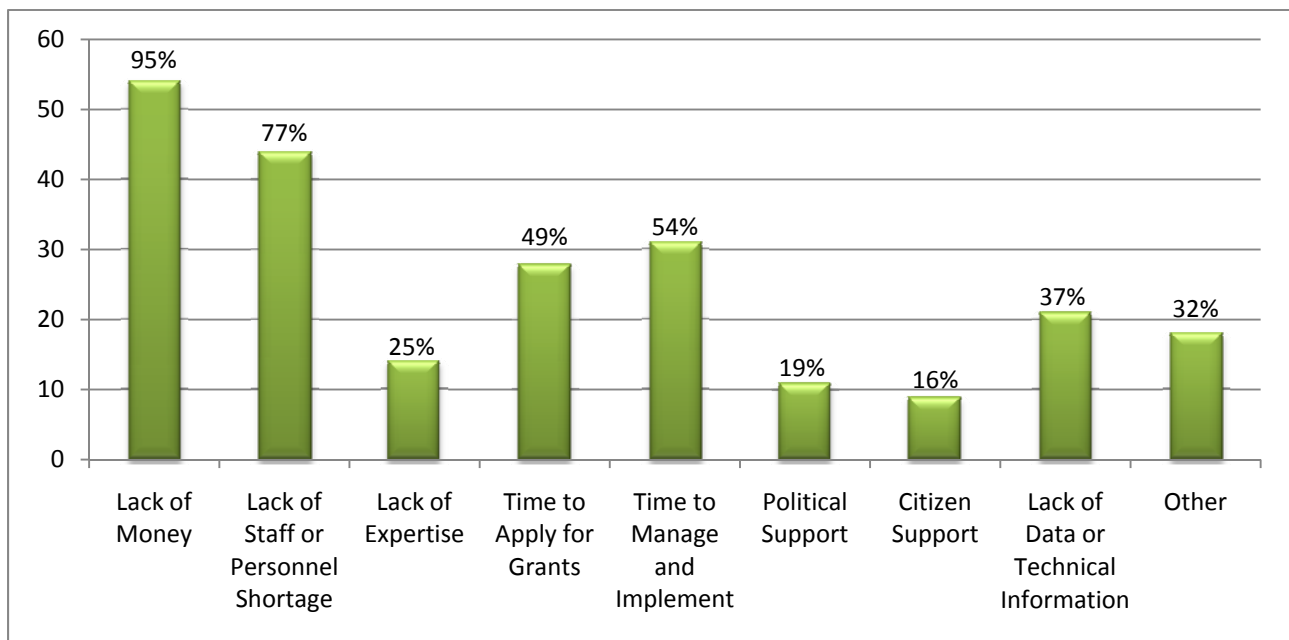
Figure 10: Question 13 Results: Obstacles in the Way of Implementing Mitigation Projects

Question 13 was intended to gather information about the difficulties and challenges regarding the actual implementation of the proposed mitigation projects in a county. The question listed a number of choices and also provided the respondent an opportunity to write in explanatory comments or indicate a category that was not listed. 57 survey respondents submitted responses to question 13.

"Lack of money" was the most common obstacle cited by the counties. 54 counties out of 57 (95%) expressed that a lack of financial resources is an obstacle to implementing mitigation

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projects. 44 counties out of 57 (77%) indicated a "lack of staff" as an obstacle to implementing mitigation projects. These two options were cited the most out of any of the options.

"Time to manage and implement," "time to apply for grants," and "lack of data/technical information" were the next most cited obstacles at 31 of 57 (54%), 28 of 57 (49%), and 21 of 57 (37%) respectively. The remaining three obstacles were cited by 25% or less of the respondents.

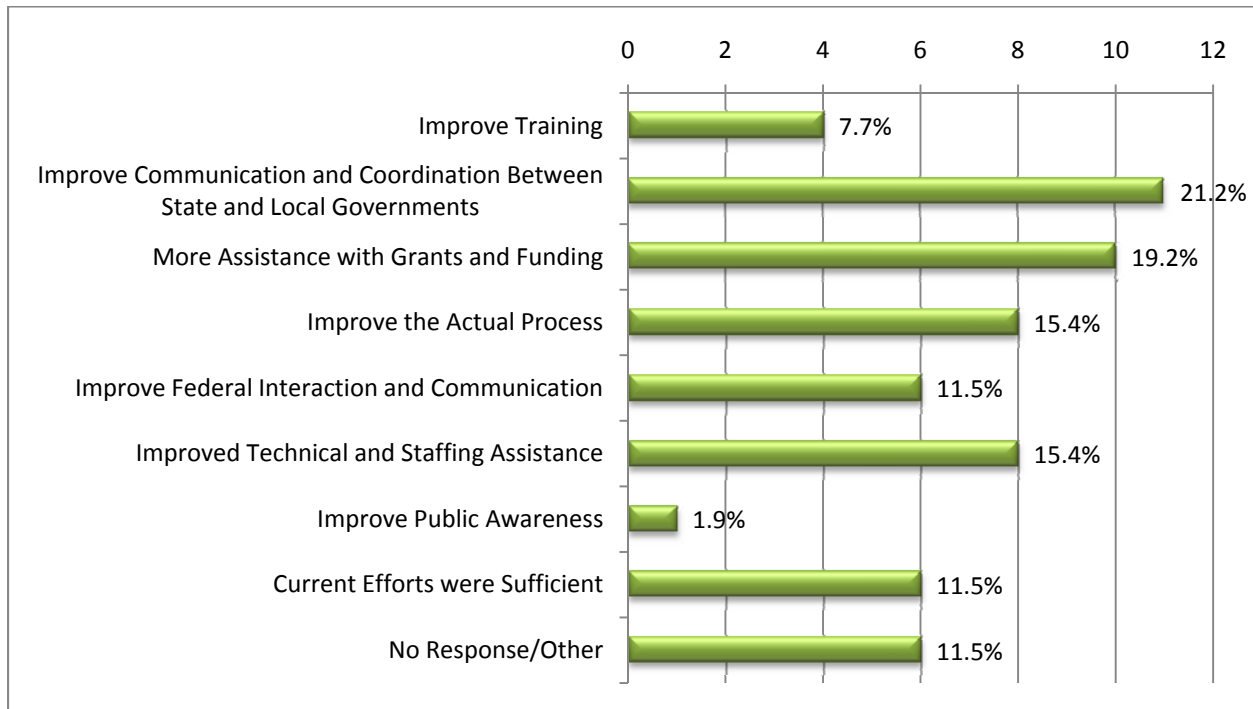**Q14. What can FDEM do to help you implement the LMS in the next planning cycle?**

Figure 11: Question 14 Results: How FDEM Can Help Implement the LMS

Question 14 was intended to gather the opinions of the responding counties about what the Florida Division of Emergency Management could do to assist the counties with implementing their recently approved local mitigation strategy in their upcoming planning cycle. The question was presented as a free response question to all the respondents. The total number of respondents was 52 because some of the counties chose not to respond to the free response question.

The responses to question 14 were compiled and categorized into common themes. The responses were categorized into 9 different categories. Some of the responses contained multiple themes, so while the total number of respondents was 52, the total number of comments about the varying themes was 60. The distribution of responses to the various themes is displayed in Figure 11. The specific responses to question 14 and how they were categorized can be seen in Appendix C.

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The most commonly identified theme from the respondents was the desire for improved communication and coordination between FDEM and the local governments with 11 of 52 responses (21.2%). Many of the responses took the form of desiring reminders and monitoring for important upcoming dates related to the LMS and mitigation.

The majority of responses under the theme of "More Assistance with Grants and Funding" expressed a need for guidance in the grant application process and the ability to find avenues for funding. Elaboration on the process and how to work through it, as well as being kept informed of new opportunities were also issues. 10 of 52 responses (19.2%) identified this theme.

Along similar lines, many responses under the theme of "Improve the Actual Process" were related to guidance and oversight. Streamlining the process and providing simple ways to ensure consistency and transparency on the parts of the various parties involved were identified as being an area for improvement. 8 of 52 responses (15.4%) identified this theme.

"Improved Technical and Staffing Assistance" had 8 of 52 responses (15.4%). It is important to note that within this theme, 5 out of 8 responses specifically mentioned the benefit of the intern program that DEM and FSU operated in order to help counties create their local mitigation strategies, and expressed a desire for its continuation.

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Q15. What can FDEM's mitigation planning unit do to better serve you and your county in terms of the LMS and future update cycles?
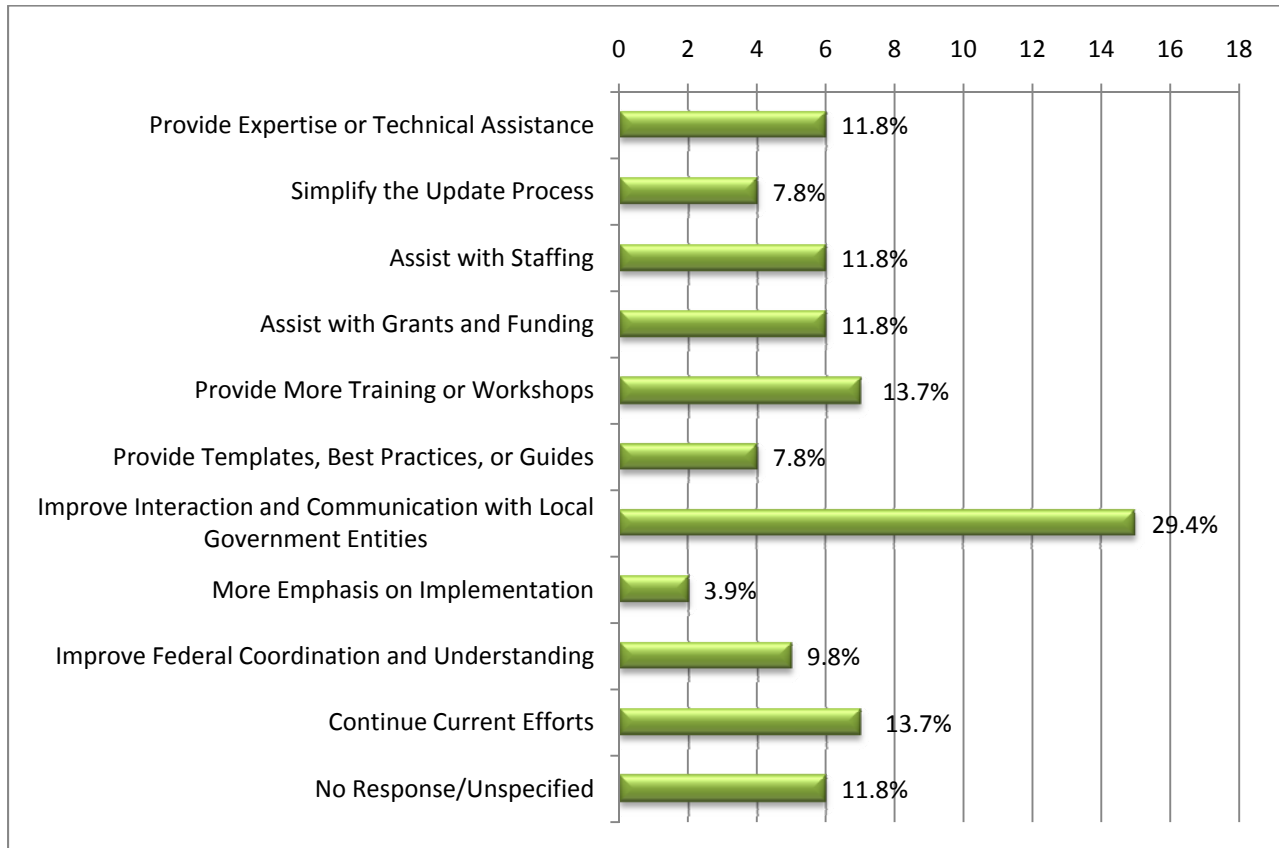
Figure 12: Question 15 Results: How FDEM's Planning Unit Can Serve the Counties

Question 15 was intended to gather the opinions of the responding counties about how the Florida Division of Emergency Management could serve the counties in regards to the LMS and any future LMS update processes. The question was presented as a free response question to all the respondents. The total number of respondents was 51 since some of the counties choose not to respond to the free response question. The distribution of responses to the various themes is displayed in Figure 12. The specific responses to question 15 and how they were categorized can be seen in Appendix C.

The responses to question 15 were compiled and categorized into common themes. The responses were categorized into 11 different categories. Some of the responses contained multiple themes, so while the total number of responses was 51, the total number of comments about the varying themes was 68. Many of the themes are similar to the themes from question 14, with a few distinctions.

 "Improve Interaction and Communication with Local Government Entities" stood out among the response themes as being the most identified area for improvement. 15 of 51 responses

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(29.4%) were related to this theme. Every other theme had 4-7 responses, with one theme having only two. The other responses were more specific opinions about ways that FDEM could be of assistance to the counties. They each stemmed from a respondents' unique experience in the LMS process, and so a wide range of suggestions is understandable. Specific comments regarding this category can be seen in Appendix C, pages 8-10 with any category labeled as "Cg"

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APPENDIX A:
Survey Questionnaire

Local Mitigation Strategy After Action Review

Respondent Involvement

1. How were you involved with the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS)? Please check all that apply.

☐ Completed majority of revisions	☐ Collaborated with consultant
☐ Coordinated update with the Working Group	☐ Conducted risk assessment
☐ Defined local mitigation goals	☐ Authored section(s) of the LMS
Other: _____	

LMS Process

2. Which sections of the LMS did your county need more guidance on during the update process as they relate to the crosswalk? Please check all that apply. (Element number refers to FEMA's Crosswalk.)

☐ Planning Process (Element 4)	☐ Mitigation Strategies (Elements 14, 16, 17)
☐ Identifying Hazards (Element 5)	☐ National Flood Insurance Program (Element 15)
☐ Profiling Hazards (Element 6)	☐ Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan (Element 18)
☐ Assessing Vulnerability (Element 7)	☐ Incorporation into Existing Planning Mechanisms (Element 19)
Other: _____	

(Optional) Please explain why you needed more guidance and what kind of guidance would have been helpful:

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. After completing the LMS, would you change anything about how your county updated the plan? Please check all that apply.

☐ Start earlier	☐ Seek additional training prior to the update
☐ Devote more time to the update	☐ Hire a consultant
☐ Get other LMS Working Group members to do more	☐ Use different risk assessment methods
☐ Attempt to involve the public more	☐ I would not change anything
Other: _____	
_____	
_____	

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4. Did your county use the following tools to develop the LMS Plan? Please check your response.

HAZUS	☐ Yes	☐ Somewhat	☐ No	☐ I don't know
MEMPHIS	☐ Yes	☐ Somewhat	☐ No	☐ I don't know

5. If your county used HAZUS or Memphis, how user friendly were the programs? Please check your response.

HAZUS	☐ Easy to use	☐ Somewhat easy to use	☐ Hard to use	☐ I don't know
MEMPHIS	☐ Easy to use	☐ Somewhat easy to use	☐ Hard to use	☐ I don't know

6. If your county used HAZUS or Memphis, how helpful were the programs? Please check your response.

HAZUS	☐ Helpful	☐ Somewhat helpful	☐ Not helpful	☐ I don't know
MEMPHIS	☐ Helpful	☐ Somewhat helpful	☐ Not helpful	☐ I don't know

7. Have you attended a FEMA G-318 training course?

☐ Yes	☐ No

If **Yes**, was the G-318 training helpful during the LMS update process?

☐ Yes	☐ Somewhat	☐ No

8. Were there any other tools, methods or handouts that were helpful in the LMS update process? Please check all that apply.

☐ FEMA guidance	☐ FDEM Tips, Hints & Tricks
☐ FDEM LMS Toolbox	☐ FEMA's 386 series
☐ FEMA's Independent Study Program	☐ No other resources were helpful
☐ GIS	☐ Subject area experts

Other:_____
_____

9. If a consultant was used, how did your county go about selecting the consultant? Please check your response.

☐ Low Bid	☐ Technical Capabilities	☐ Referral	☐ Other

A – 3

Relationship with FDEM

10. Please describe the relationship with your state LMS liaison. Was your state LMS liaison:

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Don't Know
Helpful	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informative/Knowledgeable	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provided feedback in a timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐
Difficult to work with	☐	☐	☐	☐
Easy to reach	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personable	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional	☐	☐	☐	☐

Additional comments or categories not identified:

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What were your expectations of FDEM regarding the LMS update process?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Were your expectations met? Please check your response.

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ I don't know

If **No**, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

A – 4

Implementation

13. What types of obstacles stand in the way of implementing mitigation projects in your county? Please check all that apply.

☐ Lack of money	☐ Time to manage and implement
☐ Lack of staff	☐ Political backing
☐ Lack of expertise	☐ Popular/citizen support
☐ Time to apply for grants	☐ Lack of data/technical information

Additional comments or categories not identified:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Moving Forward

14. What can FDEM do to help you implement the LMS in the next planning cycle?

_____
_____
_____
_____

15. What can FDEM's mitigation planning unit do to better serve you and your county in terms of the LMS and future update cycles?

_____
_____
_____
_____

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APPENDIX B:
LMS State Liaison Contextual References

In order to provide a context for the readers of this report, the current FDEM LMS liaisons were given a set of questions to which they gave written responses. The purpose of these questions was to help those who view the survey results to better understand the challenges and duties of the LMS liaisons. The LMS liaison job description and the answers to the questions from both liaisons have been summarized and compiled below.

The LMS liaison job description includes the following tasks:

- Providing technical assistance to the counties throughout the update process
- Review the plans and make required and recommended revisions
- Act as a "middle-man" between FEMA and the counties.

Providing technical assistance can entail lots of different tasks, but most commonly it requires answering questions and providing information to the counties in order to increase their ability to complete the LMS update process as smoothly as possible.

How long have you been working with your counties?

The two current FDEM LMS liaisons vary in the tenure they have held with their local government counterparts. Planner A was assigned to work with FDEM regions six and region seven since early 2008. She acquired the responsibilities for regions four and five in late 2008 after the previous LMS liaison had left. Planner B began working with regions one, two and three in late 2009. Prior to Planner B there had been three other planners working with the counties over a three year period.

What types of interaction/communication do you have with your counties (phone calls, emails, visits, etc.)?

Both LMS liaisons utilized personal phone calls, conference calls and emails as communication tools during the LMS update process. Approximately ten counties received personal visits from their LMS liaison. At these visits, either specific assistance was given to LMS planners on elements of the LMS and/or a presentation was given to the local LMS Working Group.

The LMS liaisons stated that they utilize several sources of information in order to help counties during the LMS update process:

- Samples from LMS plans approved by FEMA
- The Emergency Management Institute's G-318 training course materials: *Mitigation Planning Workshop for Preparing and Reviewing Local Plans*
- 44 CFR part 201 planning guidance
- *Tips, Hints and Tricks* created by Laura Herbert
    - This document provides examples, recommendations, and a "heads-up" on what things FEMA specifically looks for to ensure approval
- *Hazard Analysis Toolbox* created by Laura Herbert

o This document provides help to LMS planners for the risk analysis section portion of the LMS; it contains a variety of online information sources and descriptions of tools that can be used to complete the risk analysis.
- Extra support:
    o Edits to sections of the LMS
    o County visits
    o Interns for understaffed counties

Concerns were expressed that the planning guidance provided by FEMA should be given a detailed rewrite with examples to make it more useful and that the EMI G-318: *Mitigation Planning Workshop for Preparing and Reviewing Local Plans* is not detailed enough to be of use to the local LMS planners. More extensive training in addition to G-318 may need to be offered for LMS planners.

Did you communicate with the same person throughout the LMS process?

LMS liaison Planner A had consistently communicated with one individual for each Local Mitigation Plan during the update process. In some cases the responsible planner changed just before the planning process, but not during the actual update process. In some cases primary contact individual was a consultant preparing the document, but county officials were kept up to date on this communication.

LMS liaison Planner B was responsible for several counties where the regional planning council planner, consultant, or county planner changed during the update process. Planner B had more success with plans that did not change their planners.

Did you communicate with a consultant?

For LMS liaison Planner A, approximately 19% of the LMS plans she was responsible for were written by consultants. Two of the five counties had regional planning councils (RPCs) supporting the update effort. For one county's consultant, Planner A felt that the consultant was so involved with the LMS and brought local knowledge and a history of working successfully with the LMS Working Group. Because of these factors she stated that it was like working with county staff.

For LMS liaison Planner B, approximately 60% of the LMS plans he was responsible for were written by consultants. Close to half of plans statewide (46%) were written by consultants. Their role has been critically important to the statewide effort to complete LMS plans.

Were there significant challenges in communication with your counties? Is so, what were they?

In some cases communication challenges were faced when corresponding with consultants and RPC's. Generally, RPC's were easy to communicate with but their expertise varied greatly. Consultants generally were responsive but some much more than others. There is a need to more effectively communicate with consultants and recognize their significant role in accomplishing the update of the LMS plans. Planner A did not face significant communication challenges.

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Were your counties generally professional and willing to work with you?

Overall the counties tended to be professional and willing to work with their LMS liaisons. A few emergency managers seemed to simply want the "rubber stamp" from FEMA in order to get on with their regular day to day tasks. Several emergency managers felt the process is a hurdle to obtaining grant funding. Bill McCusker stated "This is an indication that the concept of mitigation is still new to some."

On average, how many times did the crosswalk go back and forth from the County to the State?

The number of times that the crosswalk was exchanged between the state and local communities varied between LMS liaisons and the communities. For Planner A the crosswalks were exchanged two to three times on average. Planner B found that the average was closer to 5 times on most plans.

What have you found to be most essential in getting an LMS passed? Why?

The LMS liaisons identified the following conditions as essential in the approval process for LMS plans.

- Having a good relationship with counties
- Cooperation from the planners representing the counties and their EM managers:
- EM Managers need to fully support the effort and ensure it is resourced either internally or with RPC/ consultant contracts.
- Communication between those preparing the plans and FDEM regularly is also important.

Length of tenure with the counties and taking extra steps to help county planners who are particularly frustrated with the update process are identified as ways to help build strong relationships. Often there is significant resistance from planners finding the FEMA requirements tedious, unclear, or unnecessary. It is important that the liaisons quickly return revisions and keep up communication to promote LMS issues for the counties.

B – 4

C – 1

APPENDIX C:
Individual Response Categorization for Free Response Questions

Question 11: What were your expectations of FDEM regarding the LMS update process?

Code	Themes
Ta	Provide technical assistance in editing and revising LMS/ Ensure Compliance
Ksc	Keep Staff Consistent/Praised Current Staff
Mcr	Maintain a Consistent Review Process or be specific about review process
Tme	Timeliness of Assistance
Fl	Act as the FEMA Liaison/Representative
Too	Too General to Categorize
Dnk	Did Not Know

Code	Responses
Ta	To provide a clearinghouse for the LMS approval in order to help with FEMA revisions; provide knowledge and technical expertise on revising and editing the LMS
Ksc Tme	Consistency with personnel, streamline the update process
Mcr Tme	My expectations of DEM are to send all comments and revision suggestions at once. I expected the LMS process to be more streamlined.
Ksc	To have consistent staff. It was beneficial to have one person [*personal information removed*] with us throughout the process.
Ta	To provide guidance as needed.
Tme	Timely replies to any questions and an effective partner when plan was submitted to FEMA
Ta	To provide guidance as needed to ensure compliance with DMA 2000.
Mcr	Reviews to be consistent
Fl	To be helpful and act as our representative to FEMA.
Ta	That they would review and provide any insight into areas that we were deficient in
Ta	Helping us meet the requirements of FEMA
Tme	To process and approve in a timely manner
Ta Tme	Reasonable access to schedule crosswalk and data reviews, feedback provided in a timely manner as not having an LMS impacted grant eligibility, technical assistance and clear guidance on what would be accepted for the vulnerability analysis
Tme	To be done in a timely manner
Ta	More training as to expectations and requirements
Tme	Provide timely support and feedback, and monitoring and ensure the process through approval.
Ksc	Exactly what they provided. They were extremely helpful.
Tme Ta	We expected a prompt review process and assistance in understanding the requirements
Ta	My expectations in the LMS update was technical assistance when I found that I needed more clarification than was in the manuals, FEMA guidance and my notes. Your staff more than met my expectations. [*personal information removed*] even took the time come to Highlands County and attend one of our LMS meetings to answer questions of our LMSWG.
Dnk	This was my first time updating the LMS as the LMS Coordinator and I didn't know what to expect from FDEM. FDEM, [*personal information removed*], was extremely helpful and knowledgeable.
Too	To be knowledgeable

C – 2

Ta	To provide technical assistance
Ta	Guidance and access to resources
Ta Ksc	When we needed guidance in some areas, those questions were answered efficiently and effectively. As you know, there has been quite a bit of changes at DEM and it has in the past been difficult to speak to someone familiar with the programs. Also, with the help of our Consultants, we were able to proceed painlessly with the changes and updates we needed.
Ta	My biggest expectation was that DEM would play an advisory role during the process and if I ran into problems or had any questions, they could provide guidance.
Ksc	Yes, [*personal information removed*] was so helpful during the entire process. FOLLOW UP: Stated she had no expectations due to being new to mitigation planning and that [*personal information removed*] was patient with her and helpful during the entire process.
Dnk	I don't know
Dnk	I really didn't have any expectations going into the review process.
Too	Not too different than that of the last LMS Update in 1995.
Fl	To act as a liaison between the County and FEMA
Too	To be helpful
Ta	Provide assistance through a trained intern to accomplish a 5-year update to the LMS.
Ksc	FDEM DID A FANTASTIC JOB!
Ta	Review the Plan and provide guidance on what was compliant, what needed work, and how to bring deficient areas into compliance
Ta Fl	Be there with support, information and advice if needed. Advocate for submitting communities on FEMA contentious issues.
Ta	I expected FDEM to assist us in navigating the approval process and resolve miscommunications/misunderstandings between us and FEMA reviewers.
Ta	Provide guidance as to Federal/State review of LMS updates.
Tme	Be responsive to requests.
Ta	Putnam County's expectation of FDEM regarding the LMS update process was to assist in compliance with the FEMA requirements and provide practical examples of how compliance can be achieved
Dnk	Unsure of what to expect as this was our first time conducting an LMS update
Ta	Assist when asked and to review the plan in order to pass FEMA's review.
Ksc Mcr	Provide one professional reviewer (liaison) for the LMS project. Questions need to be funneled through this individual.
Fl Mcr	I expect the FDEM to be our support to FEMA since we are not allowed to speak to FEMA directly. I also expect the FDEM to have all the "problem areas" of County LMS plans hashed out before the plan goes to FEMA.
Ta	Correct me if I'm wrong….if FDEM receives funding from FEMA/Feds to administer/manage LMS efforts when it comes to meeting Federal guidelines/requirements, it would be appreciative by local communities to receive funding as well to insure support people are hired and or contracted to assist in plan updates.
Ta	I expect DEM to be ready and willing to assist
Ta	To help us with meeting the standards of both FDEM and FEMA, they sometimes differ.
Too	As it was one of my first interactions with FDEM, I did not have any expectations. Our department relied primarily on our consultant and FDEM's role was to check and approve

C – 3

	the final document. I see FDEM having a bigger role (and expectations) moving forward.
Tme Ta Ksc	Just about as provided, to ascertain what information was expected of the county from FEMA to get the update completed in a timely manner.
Too	My expectations were to receive a FEMA approved Plan
Mcr	To be specific on what was needed or wanted
Dnk	none

Question 12: Were your expectations met? If No, please explain.

There was little expertise in completing an LMS revision process and getting it through to FEMA. It is understandable that this expectation was not met though as not everyone can have the chance to update these documents.
My expectations were not met because I received the plan back 10 times with incremental revisions. I wanted all the comments and revisions at once so the process could be more efficient. I did not expect the process to take over a year like it did
My expectations were that reviews would be consistent. They were not. We would submit a plan for review, submit revisions and have our plan returned with a brand new set of infractions. The review requirements were "nit-picky" and overall, unrealistic. IN an attempt to create a thorough plan, I believe the state created a process that was, overall, counterproductive.
Submitted October 2009…approved February 2011
Process was way too complicated, not enough information available to educate local governments on "How TO"
The plan was not followed through the approval stage. Had to keep calling and calling and calling....................
The process needs to be broken down into easier pieces. It seems sometimes we are working on a plan to meet more of the requirements versus the needs
No, but not because of FDEM. FEMA placed many roadblocks in the process as was made obvious during the review process.
It took way too long to get this plan approved. This was primarily due to the number of interns that were assigned this LMS and the different views from each reviewer.
The St. Johns County LMS Plan went back and forth between myself and FEMA no less than 4 - 5 times, I lost count. The State should have either told FEMA that the Plan was functional and met the criteria or they should have sent it back to me with all recommendation at one time. I also believe FDEM could do a better job telling us the FEMA secrets for having a Plan pass the FEMA litmus test. I began the submittal process 6 months before the LMS Plan was due for review, it did not get completed and approved until a month after it had expired. This is not an acceptable amount of time for a plan to be "under review"
Expectations for the most part was met, i.e. we were able to use an intern in part to assist with the plan update. Refer to 14 for greater expectations.
Could not clarify or was sure of what was needed in problem areas, could tell you it wasn't correct but not sure how to fix it

C – 4

Question 14: What can FDEM do to help you implement the LMS in the next planning cycle?

Code	Themes
Tr	Improve Training
Cc	Improve Communication and Coordination Between State and Local Governments
Gf	More Assistance with Grants and Funding
Pr	Improve the Actual Process
Fe	Improve Federal Interaction and Communication
Sa	Improved Technical and Staffing Assistance
PA	Improve Public Awareness
Es	Current Efforts were Sufficient
NA	No Response/Other

Code	Responses
Tr	Provide state training earlier and throughout the LMS cycle (not just on update years). Offer this training (G-318) in several locations around the state.
Cc	Share State committee/meeting reports out to local LMS committees.
Es	The guidance that was provided was helpful in getting through the current planning cycle.
Fe	FDEM is fine - FEMA seems to be the obstacle
Gf	Assistance with preparing mitigation applications; earlier notification of grant opportunities to allow more time to prepare & submit through local process;
Pr	Focus on the mission of mitigation when establishing new criteria. Keep it simple, keep it concise, and keep the process consistent throughout the department and from county to county.
Fe	Get FEMA's attention that the LMS planning process and requirements are TOO COMPLICATED and DISCOURAGES citizen participation because it is so bureaucratic. When a three-page law translates into a 400+-page plan, there's problems. need to make the plan and process simpler and in more local control
Es	There is nothing at this time…our biggest issue is funding.
Tr	Provide more planning training
Gf	keep the funding available to complete projects
Gf	More funding opportunities- I participated in the FEMA National PDM review in 2011 and observed other regions allowed planning grants to be submitted from the local jurisdictions, Continue to furnish professional stage and minimize less of experienced personnel.
NA	N/A
Pr	Work with us in setting up "check points" during the review process on a weekly basis
Tr	Increase training efforts in preparation of COMPLIANT documents
Cc	Assign one person to be the county liaison throughout the process, with hopes that they will have a working knowledge of LMS and not rely solely on "checking boxes".
Sa	Continue the intern project!
NA	No response
Cc Es	We did not have a bad experience, so I would say: Continue to provide support especially in the form of gentle reminders (which worked really well for us).

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Tr Gf	Is there anyone available from FDEM that would be able to come to Highlands County and speak to our Working Group regarding the types of mitigation projects that are eligible versus the types of projects under the FEMA grants. Additionally, is there any training available for the LMS staff and as site where this information is contained to distribute to our LMSWG?
Cc	Encourage jurisdictions to start earlier, possibly by giving a realistic time line of how long it takes to get through the approval path.
Es	Continue to provide technical assistance as requested
Pr	More lead time for completion of the requirements
NA	Here's the facts: This program is complex and very bureaucratic, so locals know this is not a quick process & on top of that local governments are flat out broke. We will do our best to implement this program.
Gf Pr Sa	Provide funding for updates and projects; make the planning and funding process as transparent as possible; provide up to date information on a timely basis; provide other technical assistance as required.
Gf	Help with the finances
Cc	Keeping the lines of communication open would be a big help, especially for rural counties. Having a contact person (liaison) stay in touch occasionally with the LMS Chair to make sure everything is running smoothly during the update process would help.
Es	Keep being supportive and available for questions.
Pr	If the LMS is not tied into all grant aspects of LEO, EMS, and EM then it will not be used
Pr	Fix the project process it is presently broken from our viewpoint
NA	NA
Gf	Provide funding for consultants.
Pr Fe	Coordinate more closely with FEMA and move ahead in streamlining the process by removing some of the confusion in getting the document accepted through review
Pa	Help with publicity. Help us to make the public more aware of the LMS and what it is accomplishing or can accomplish.
Sa	The intern program was excellent for our needs. Continue this support in the future.
Cc Sa	Reminder of dates upcoming for compliance. Providing interns where available.
Sa	Provide examples of best practices on various elements of the LMS Plan. Provide template for mitigation strategies by hazard.
NA	Not Sure
Fe	Provide consistency of review with Federal reviewers
Sa	Continue intern program or provide funding for staff.
Cc	By developing regional mitigation objectives/projects and activities that directly benefit the FDEM regions.
Cc	Provide timely notice of when grant cycles will open and timely notice of changes to FEMA requirements
Es	Provide the same assistance that was provided this go around.
Cc Fe	"1) Establish one liaison (professional) reviewer for the process 2) Work closely with the County to make certain all questions are answered. 3) Close supervision of interns to make certain questions are answered immediately - not once a week. 4) Work with FEMA to see how to expedite mitigation projects."
Pr	Make HMGP application process less complicated. Have staff members that understand in

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	detail the HMGP process and give correct advice.
Sa	It may be beneficial to have a traveling team to work with LMS communities during the update timeline, at least for those that may require assistance.
NA	As we move forward I feel our County LMS will not drastically change. We should be able to update more easily since it was re-structured. FDEM would be a great help in identifying areas of improvement in our current LMS so that our working group can focus on those plan areas for the next planning cycle
Cc	Work to get all of us on the same page before we begin.
Gf	Need a class that goes beyond the update process and focuses on applying for and managing mitigation grants
Cc Fe	Start providing guidance sooner in the process. Work with FEMA on some of their criteria regarding predicting future losses and how to mitigate.
Gf	Provide assistance with building the data/grant applications...we would love to be a pilot project to have engineering student interns build applications with cost benefit scenarios
Gf	We need grants to help with the engineering of the projects.
Sa	Provide graduate intern assistance again

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Question 15: What can FDEM's mitigation planning unit do to better serve you and your county in terms of the LMS and future update cycles?

Code	Themes
Et	Provide Expertise or Technical Assistance
Up	Simplify the Update Process
St	Assist with Staffing
Gf	Assist with Grants and Funding
Tw	Provide More Training or Workshops
Bp	Provide Templates, Best Practices, or Guides
Cg	Improve Interaction and Communication with Local Government Entities
Im	More Emphasis on Implementation
Fc	Improve Federal Coordination and Understanding
Ce	Continue Current Efforts
NA	No Response/Unspecified

Code	Responses
Et Ce	Continue to provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance
Up	Stay away from rewrites and keep updates simple and straight-forward.
St Gf	The LMS requirement is time consuming. Many counties, including mine, do not have the finances to hire someone whose main purpose is LMS. The State could look at possible funding for LMS positions within the counties.
Ce	Continue to support counties.
Fc	See #14 (FDEM is fine - FEMA seems to be the obstacle)
Et	Provide updated hazard analysis to include new population data, new slosh models and all communities within the local jurisdiction
Up	Retain employees and maintain consistency with the methodology that is utilized to review the plans
Fc	See #14 above (get FEMA's attention that the LMS planning process and requirements are TOO COMPLICATED and DISCOURAGES citizen participation because it is so bureaucratic. When a three-page law translates into a 400+-page plan, there's problems. need to make the plan and process simpler and in more local control)
Ce	They did a good job this time and hope that it continues.
Gf	Provide funding
NA	No Answer (they typed this in)
Tw Bp	Provide templates of accepted practices or data collection acceptable to FEMA, Potential coordination issues are on the horizon with FEMA integrating Corps of Engineers, DOT and HUD sustainability principles in mitigation practices, Need Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) training to support mitigation project development at the local jurisdiction level.
Bp	Develop a model document that meets all criteria. It is understood that all communities are unique, however it would be helpful to have a standard to work from.
Up	Try to keep the same people in place during the review process. Give them a pay raise!
Up	Assist in document compliance, streamline review process…eliminate either State of Federal

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	SEPARATE review…COMBINE THIS EFFORT
Cg	Start early and meet face to face with the Local LMS working group
Cg	Attend LMS meetings...provide regular guidance regarding plan maintenance.
NA	No response
St Tw	We would be open to the "intern" program if it became available on our next update cycle. It was offered to us well after our process had begun and consequently we were not able to take advantage of the opportunity. We would also be open to training. I believe the reason G-318 was not helpful was because of the time that has passed since I took the class in 2005 and the changes in the LMS world since then. Training specifically geared towards the plan requirements would be beneficial to a future update.
Et Ce	Provide guidance on the LMS during the interim period between 5-year updates. Continue providing support and advice on issues as they arise.
Bp	The state liaison was extremely helpful with websites with information on risks and previous events. Maybe FDEM could come up with a comprehensive list to be included in the Tips.
Cg	Keep the Counties updated
Et	Provide technical assistance in the form of webinars (rather than on-site meetings).
NA	As noted
Cg	Keep us informed, be accessible, and help us deal with federal requirements and requests
NA	Nothing needed at this time
Bp Cg	Communication as described above and conducting additional community outreach. Any LMS related materials that could benefit communities conducting the update should be distributed. For example, I found the Tips, Hints and Tricks information provided by DEM very useful
Ce	Keep being supportive and available for questions.
Im	Needs to be more concerned about the practical nature of the LMS not by making LMS document bigger or more detailed. I felt the update added more fluff than actions to the LMS.
Gf Fc	Work with FEMA to get a handle on the HMGP project review process which at worst could take a month or two rather than the present length, which is years, this is unacceptable.
Cg	Come speak at my LMS meetings to let the working group know what all is involved in the review process.
Cg Ce	Maintain FDEM - County (Area Coordinators) staffing of the caliber FDEM LMS liaisons currently exhibit. Communication which is both accurate and timely is, as with most undertakings, key to the success of the LMS.
Ce	There is no problem between the County and FDEM. Experience has shown the FDEM is professional, experiences and fully capable of functioning and assisting when needed if their hands are not tied to mass confusion and disorganization due to personnel turnovers at the federal level.
St	The student interns were a great help, just needed them longer to help with the public hearings and review/editing process. It would help both the student to understand the process and the County.
Cg	Be able to travel to County Commission / City Council meeting to provide 15 minute briefing on the LMS and its importance, with an additional 15 minutes to answer questions.
Tw	Workshops in region financial assistance to promote and fund projects
St Cg	Reminder of dates upcoming for compliance. Providing interns where available.

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Gf Cg	Post stats of grant projects (HMGP, PDM) online and keep current. Copy LMS coordinators on communication with project applicants throughout the course of the project.
NA	Not Sure
Cg	Maintain contact with timely update information. Be cognizant that local governments typically do not have mitigation staffs who can devote full-time to LMS updates and other efforts. Everyone thinks their specific role/project should be everyone else's priority
St	Continue intern program or provide funding for staff.
St	By continuing the LMS intern program and offer assistance of such interns to Putnam County in the future prior to future update cycles
Et Tw	Continue to provide the training needed to update the LMS and information on software programs available to assist in the analysis efforts. Continue to provide the training needed to update the LMS and information on software programs available to assist in the analysis efforts.
Tw Cg	Keep us informed of changes. Teach the G-318 course within the region every 18-24 months.
Cg	1) Establish one (1) mitigation professional per region to answer questions, work with the LMS working groups, assist with mitigation projects, and attend regional emergency manager's meetings. 2) Get mitigation professionals out of Tallahassee. It is impossible to work closely with the mitigation specialists with them being so far.
Et Fc	FDEM Staff needs to be more knowledgeable about all aspects of the Local Mitigation Strategy Planning process and be able to explain to County's what exactly it is that FEMA is looking for.
Cg Im	As we move forward I feel our County LMS will not drastically change. We should be able to update more easily since it was re-structured. FDEM would be a great help in identifying areas of improvement in our current LMS so that our working group can focus on those plan areas for the next planning cycle
Fc	Fully identify all expectations ahead of time and make sure they coincide with FEMA before the process begins.
NA	Be proactive
Tw	Give better, more detailed training on criteria needed for the update. This should be an ongoing effort - better guidance on areas of the LMS that could be updated and improved upon during the year and submitted with the annual update. The 5 year update would then not be so laborious also.
Gf	We need assistance with moving to the funding level.....we know the projects that require mitigation....we need support with the grant process…it does us no good to understand the problem and lose on the grant process
Cg	Be able to tell the project managers what is wrong and what is needed to correct it.
Gf Tw	Provide resources

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